Conclusions

by Steffen Patzold

The summary highlights the extent to which the articles collected in the volume go beyond previous research on bishops and open up new perspectives: The contributions no longer only ask about the "hard power" of bishops. Instead, they focus on episcopal "soft power": they impressively show that bishops knew how to use books, pen and ink to manipulate ideas and convictions and to reframe discourses. A basis for this new approach is provided by the scans of medieval manuscripts, which are now made available by libraries in Europe in large numbers and excellent quality.

Middle Ages; 9th century; Italy; bishops; soft power.

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Networks of bishops – networks of texts: analysing manuscripts and episcopal tools of government in 9th century Italy has been a rewarding enterprise, indeed! The questions asked, and the methods applied, allow us new and more in-depth insights into the social fabric of Italian dioceses, into forms of episcopal government, and the negotiation of power between bishops, the local society and the wider Carolingian world.

It becomes abundantly clear just how fresh these perspectives and methods are when we look back to medieval research on bishops just one generation ago. In the summer semester of 1992, I attended my *Proseminar* on medieval history at the University of Hamburg. It was taught by Hans-Werner Goetz, the topic was *Episcopal Elections in the Middle Ages*. While the episcopate was already a classic subject, the questions and methods of research were rather different from our's today. At least from a German perspective, there were only two major fields of research for the period up to the 11th century. The first was about the emergence of *Bischofsherrschaft* during Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: How did bishops attain a leading social and political position in their *civitates*? Had they usurped this position or had it been delegated to them, first by emperors, later by kings? What role did their social origins play in this process? And what consequences did episcopal rule have for urban societies in the various regions of the *Imperium Romanum*? Historians who advanced this discussion read imperial laws and royal decrees, episcopal *vitae* and epitaphs (and a great deal of Gregory of Tours). Prosopography was their preferred research method.

The second discussion was about the episcopate of the 10th and 11th century: In 1982, a young British medievalist named Timothy Reuter had questioned the German doctrine of the "imperial church system"[1]. The debate he had initiated was still ongoing when I wrote my *Proseminar* paper on the election of St Ulrich as bishop of Augsburg. Those historians who discussed the Ottonian and Salian *Reichskirche* read royal charters for bishops, the colourful episcopal *vitae* (like Gebhard's *Vita Oudalrici*) and historiographical texts, especially the *Gesta episcoporum* of that period. Here, too, prosopographical studies were important: Historians asked how closely bishops and kings cooperated, how particular the German episcopate was in comparison

1 Reuter, *The «Imperial Church System»*.

to the bishops in the rest of Europe – and whether it was methodologically sound to understand bishops primarily as royal officials.

The episcopate of the Carolingian period, however, received rather less attention. The central research questions did not fit for this period: In the 8th and 9th centuries, most cities had lost their social and economic importance and the "Ottonian-Salian imperial church" simply did not yet exist. On the other hand, the questions and methods which structure the eight contributions to this volume were not yet established in medieval research. In fact, they were not even conceivable: "Network" was not yet a central concept in sociological and historical research, as the internet was only known to a small group of nerds and played no major role, neither in everyday life, nor in research. Of course, medieval manuscripts were kept in the libraries and archives of Europe and the USA. But no-one even had dreamed of being able to view high-resolution scans of these manuscripts effortlessly, at the desk at home – let alone to put a scan from Modena next to one from Verona or Lucca to compare scripts, rulings, mis-en-page. If you wanted to see a manuscript, you either had to travel to it, or you had to order a black-and-white microfilm, pay for it, and wait patiently for its arrival…

Therefore, twenty years ago, when I started to work on my habilitation thesis about Carolingian bishops, a collection of articles about bishops during Lothar's reign would have looked different. Prosopography would have been pivotal. Historians would have tried to show how bishops in Northern Italy were integrated in aristocratic families and how aristocratic bonds of friendship, loyalty and *pacta* framed and formed episcopal as well as royal politics. Of course, the papers of this collection deal with individual bishops: They introduce them and closely observe their careers. We learn a lot about such important figures as Ratold of Verona, Maxentius of Aquileia, George of Ravenna, Leodoin of Modena, Berengar of Lucca, or the popes Sergius II and Leo IV. But their family ties and their social relations do not frame and structure the research. Nor does prosopography as a method play a major role.

Twenty years ago, episcopal charters likely would have been more important for historians: Who enjoyed what kind of royal privileges? And what kind of services did the emperors expect in return from the bishops? How about the organisation of military service, for example, and the role of episcopal contingents in Lothar's army? Edward Schoolman has briefly mentioned the battle of Fontenoy in 841, Maddalena Betti the muslim attack on Rome in 846; but war and the military – Friedrich Prinz' *Klerus und Krieg*[2] – are far from central to the papers of this collection.

The same is true for royal charters and privileges granted to bishops. Edoardo Manarini offers a detailed analysis of Louis the Pious' diploma for the church of Modena from 822. But interestingly enough, Manarini not only

[2] Prinz, *Klerus und Krieg*.

considers the juridical content of this charter, he also reads the document as a narrative source – a text which tells a story reaching back to the late 7th century, a long history of close relations between the bishops of Modena and Lombard as well as Carolingian kings. Paolo Tomei, in his article on Berengar and Ambrose of Lucca, has taken into account the astonishingly rich corpus of original charters from this *sedes* and the changes of the social fabric and the power structures that are reflected in this fascinating material. But Paolo Tomei, too, is not only interested in the juridical content of these documents. He also describes the changes of diplomatic culture, analysing the script, the use of the Caroline minuscule, the signatures of the bishops.

Thus, the papers collected here, are not so much interested in episcopal "hard power" politics. The authors do not focus on juridical privileges and episcopal control of justice, nor on warfare, markets, minting, and the bishops' landed property. Nobody would deny, of course, that bishops in 9th century Italy were powerful players. But to understand how their power worked, the papers rather concentrate on books and saints, on texts and their uses, on narratives and images. They deal with what can be called "soft power": The authors uncover, describe and analyse the means bishops used to convince others – not by coercion, not by violence or money, but by framing and influencing shared ideas, convictions, beliefs, and values. The Italian bishops we come to know in this collection were trained to use parchment and the quill. They were masters in manipulating texts, experts in writing and compiling. (At the very least they knew how to make others write and how to use texts written by others for their own political goals).

Miriam Tessera has shown how the archbishop Angilbert of Milan dealt with the historical legacy of his quite extraordinary *sedes*. Angilbert created a new, Carolingian episcopal culture at Milan. He used his network, which connected Northern Italian and north-alpine bishops, to foster the presence of intellectuals like Hildemar (and their books). Moreover, archbishop Angilbert exploited the translation of Roman relics to Leggiuno, the compilation of a collection of canons – surviving in the Veronese manuscript LXIII (61) –, and the renewal of Saint Ambrose's cult. All this allowed Angilbert to inscribe himself and his Church in the Carolingian project of *correctio*. The new textual, written culture he introduced in Milan, was meant to demonstrate the renewed power of the Milanese *sedes*.

Francesco Veronese points out, that the bishops of Verona who came from north of the Alps first of all had to integrate themselves in their new bishopric before they could integrate their sedes in the power networks of the Carolingian world. To achieve this aim, Ratold of Verona heavily relied on the possibilities the *scriptorium* and the Cathedral library in Verona offered to him – be it hagiographical or liturgical texts (like the *ordines Romani* or the *laudes* for the Carolingian emperor and his *imperatrix*). In this regard, Ratold's person and network made a difference for Verona's history. His training, his political and familial connections to institutions and social groups north of the Alps, his capability to deal with books like the manuscripts XCII and

XCV of the Biblioteca Capitolare in Verona: all this helped to make Verona a hub of Carolingian *correctio* in Northern Italy.

Parchment, quills, the production and use of texts and books: All this also played an important role in the field of legal culture. Law – and especially canon law – was based on written texts; it was compiled and collected in books. But canon law was also an intellectual challenge: It survived in a puzzling mass of many different historical or systematic collections, as Michael Heil has pointed out. In the Carolingian world, nobody was able to have a perfect overview over all those canons that had been created and transmitted over the centuries, from Nicea 325 to Toledo 633, from Ankyra 314, or Carthage 419 to Mainz 852. Nevertheless, bishops had to cope with all this dispersed and difficult material. It defined the very basis of their office and their competences, and it was seen as a significant (if not the most important) textual resource of Carolingian *correctio*. Here, in canons and decretals, bishops were to find the holy rules that framed how God wanted the *populus christianus* to live.

No wonder, several papers deal with this highly complex material. Miriam Tessera analyses a Veronese manuscript, a collection of canons which might have been produced under the supervision of archbishop Angilbert of Milan. Moreover she presents us with another interesting text, today at Montpellier: a miscellany of canon law, probably produced at Milan, including Mansuetus' letter to emperor Constantine IV from 679. These books, Miriam Tessera argues, were instruments used by archbishop Angilbert to position and to promote his own see in the larger Carolingian world.

Paolo Tomei analyses the famous ms. 490 of the Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana in Lucca – yet another canon law book. Tomei focusses on the *Dicta Gelasii papae*, a text exclusively transmitted by this manuscript: The text is written by a hand which closely resembles the one of bishop Berengar of Lucca. Based on a couple of ancient canones, the little text defines, how public penitents (and other groups) are supposed to be positioned within the space of a church. As short as the text might be – it deals with one of the central topics of Mayke de Jong's "Penitential State"[3]. Once again, therefore, we can observe, how an Italian bishop used a canon law book and a juridical text to inscribe himself in the Carolingian project of *correctio*.

Michael Heil discusses how canon law was being used during the long conflict between the patriarchs of Aquileia and Grado. He concentrates his analysis on the judicial decision at the Council of Mantua in June 827. As Heil underlines, *canones* were texts, but not only texts: The word *canones* could refer to a concrete legal text, but it could also refer rather vaguely to ideas about how clerics should behave in general. Nevertheless, in the conflict between Grado and Aquileia in 827, canon law – as it "lived" in a canon law

[3] De Jong, *The Penitential State*.

book, a *codex canonum* – was at hand and was used for legal practice: Maxentius of Aquileia probably cited the *Epitome Hispana* (or some closely related collection); and the further legal procedure at the synod of Mantua explicitly included a reading of canons.

Finally, Edoardo Manarini has presented us with the library of the bishop Leodoin of Modena. Here, too, canon law played a major role. Leodoin read and used it in form of a centuries old law book. Manarini is more skeptical, however, with regard to the famous manuscript O.I.2 of the Biblioteca Capitolare of Modena and its relation to Leodoin. The codex transmits a massive collection of secular law, the *Liber legum* of a certain Lupus. Hubert Mordek was convinced that this *Liber* had been produced by no other than Lupus of Ferrières, one of the most famous intellectuals north of the Alps. Britta Mischke, however, is currently reviewing this attribution. Her main argument is based on the models the compiler Lupus used to produce his collection. All these models rather seem to point to Italy. Thus it is reasonable to assume that the compilation was made in Italy, not in Eastern Francia, or the monastery of Fulda (i.e. the place where Lupus of Ferrières lived in the first half of the 830s). If this argument holds, we should consider the "Liber legum" to be a product of Italian legal culture.

Another central part of "soft power" is the construction and propagation of images of political leaders: Maddalena Betti has compared the two versions of pope Sergius' life, transmitted in two different *recensiones* of the *Liber pontificalis*. Both versions originated in the Lateran, and both circulated outside of Rome and Italy, even if the second version survives only in an early modern copy. This second version contains an interestingly critical denunciation of simoniac practices during Sergius' pontificate. Maddalena Betti argues that this second version was created in Rome after Sergius' death, in the first years of the following pontificate under pope Leo IV. It is a reactive piece: to the Arab sack of Rome in 846 as well as to the role Sergius' brother Benedict had played during this papacy. In Betti's view, the text cleverly connects Benedict's misdeeds to the political position given to him by the emperor – thus implicitly criticising Lothar's *Constitutio Romana* from 824 and the influence of imperial officials in the city of Rome. Thus, we can observe "soft power" in action: In this case the Lateran clergy using parchment and quill to frame the situation in Rome after 846 and the political discourse in a very specific way to blame Sergius II and imperial interference in Roman affairs.

Edward Schoolman, finally, presents us with the other *Liber pontificalis*, the one from Ravenna: He shows how Agnellus, in this text, constructed a heroic image of Lothar I as a kind of *Carolus magnus redivivus*. This was important, because Agnellus wanted to show off the close relations to the imperial court which his see always had enjoyed from Late Antiquity onwards. These relations were glorious. But they were also dangerous – and expensive: Charlemagne had transferred some of the city's ancient monuments to his palace at Aachen. Lothar made archbishop George of Ravenna pay an incredible sum for the honour to be the godfather of Rotrud, the emperor's daughter.

Relations to the emperor were of central importance for Ravenna's identity, they had to be shown and praised, even if they were unpleasant and painful at times. Historiography was a medium of "soft power" that could help explain this tension (and to endure its consequences).

Taken together, the papers collected in this volume show in detail how parchment, ink and quills were used as tools of episcopal "soft power" – that is as instruments to influence and to convince, by creating a set of shared ideas, beliefs, and values. Compared to the historiography about bishops from 20 or 30 years ago this expands our knowledge considerably: It helps us to better understand how bishops were able to legitimate their position within their diocese as well as their city's place in the larger power networks of the Carolingian world.

We are able to do this kind of research because manuscripts have become accessible in an unprecedented scale: Analysing high quality scans of dozens of manuscripts, kept at different libraries from all over Europe has become easy. This deeply changes our way of working and thinking. Laura Pani, however, has impressively shown in her paper how complex it still is to discuss one single group of manuscripts and to link them to the court of Lothar. The so called *Lothar-Gruppe* consists of manuscripts which today are spread over different libraries (in Berlin and the Vatican, in London and Padova). Only two manuscripts of this group (the ones at London and Padova) are explicitly linked to the emperor. The attribution of the others has mainly been based on their initials and decorations, but Laura Pani has demonstrated that these attributions are much less sure than historians thought so far. The picture changes if we take palaeography into account. So the *Lothar-Gruppe* is to be reconsidered (in a similar way, Karl Ubl has demonstrated some years ago that the famous *leges*-scriptorium at the court of Louis the Pious did not exist[4]).

As we have seen, the situation is much better at the library of Verona, where many books from the second quarter of the 9th century are still at its original place. This is linked to one of the characteristics of episcopal power which Timothy Reuter has already pointed out in his seminal article about *Ein Europa der Bischöfe*: Bishops had a capital city; they had one central place where they were supposed to stay most of the time[5]. Therefore, an episcopal library had much better chances to survive than a royal one. It is no coincidence that we know somewhat more about the libraries of the emperors Otto III and Henry II[6]: This is due to the fact that Henry died without a son and gave his books to the Cathedral church of Bamberg which he had founded himself in 1007. At this place, in an episcopal library, these books stayed together as a group and survived over the centuries.

4 Ubl, *Gab es das Leges-Skriptorium*.
5 Reuter, *Ein Europa*.
6 See, however, also the critical analysis of older optimistic ascriptions of books to Otto III's library by Hoffmann, *Bamberger Handschriften*, pp. 5–34.

The papers collected in this volume create a solid basis for future research on bishops and manuscript culture. Two questions, however, remain to be answered by future research:

1. Can we measure if and how all those texts commissioned by bishops (or even written by bishops) really did what they were supposed to do? Did bishops actually *wield* "soft power" in this way? Were they successful? Personally working with and writing books, I want to assume that the written word does have some effect on societies. But, I think we cannot be sure that it always had the effect the authors wanted it to have. Texts need interpretation. They can be debated and contested; and as we all know, meaning depends on a lot of factors, such as how the texts are received and understood by those who read them. Networks consist of many different nodes; power is a social relation. Therefore, we need to learn more about the other nodes of the episcopal networks and about the other side of their social relations: How did monks or priests in a diocese think about their bishop? How did urban elites think about them? And a last, rather methodological question: How did this "soft power" work in a world in which so many people actually knew that texts were not harmless carriers of information, but powerful tools of manipulation? Did this knowledge limit or influence the effectivity of the bishops' endeavour?
2. How did these resources, instruments, and practices of "soft-power" interact with the "hard power" bishops could also wield? So far, we can only guess that there was no easy, direct relation between both. Books could come into play where resources of "hard power" (like land, money, armed followers) were weak – as a kind of *Ersatz*. But they could also disguise forms and resources of "hard power" or even be used to make "hard power" invisible. Both forms might create synergies, but sometimes perhaps also frictions. We need to systematically integrate the different resources and forms of power the bishops in the Carolingian world disposed of – their landed property and their uses of it, their connections to kings, their military capacities, their control over local churches, but also their sacral instruments (like the excommunication), and their rich resources of "soft power" linked to their access to libraries, books, and knowledge.

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